IN THE CLAIMS

1-8.(canceled)

9.(currently amended) Process for the production of a ~~multi-layer~~ multi-plate gasket comprising at least a first metal gasket ~~layer~~ plate and a second metal gasket ~~layer~~ plate, wherein said first gasket ~~layer~~ plate is produced from one respective gasket ~~layer~~ plate section of a starting material comprising several continuous gasket ~~layer~~ plate sections, wherein the gasket ~~layer~~ plate sections are machined during operating cycles in a follow-on combination tool having several machining stations following one another along a direction of feed, wherein at least one of the machining stations is designed as a station for cutting outer contour lines, facing outer contour lines of two adjacent gasket ~~layers~~ plates being cut in said station by means of a tool for cutting outer contour lines, and wherein the gasket ~~layer~~ plate sections are moved further along the direction of feed by a feed distance by means of a feeding device between two operating cycles,

wherein the outer contour lines of the two adjacent gasket ~~layers~~ plates are cut with the same cutting edge of the tool for cutting outer contour lines and wherein the feed distance is selected to be essentially the same as the extension of the outer contour of a finished gasket ~~layer~~ plate or a group of finished gasket ~~layers~~ plates along the direction of feed,

wherein the outer contour of said first gasket ~~layer~~ plate is provided with a corner,

wherein said second gasket ~~layer~~ plate is produced by means of a follow-on combination tool, the feed distance with said tool being greater than the extension of the outer contour of said second gasket ~~layer~~ plate along the direction of feed,

and wherein said first gasket ~~layer~~ plate and said second gasket ~~layer~~ plate are disposed one on the other to form said ~~multi-layer~~ multi-plate gasket such that said second gasket ~~layer~~ plate projects beyond said corner on said first gasket ~~layer~~ plate.

10.(canceled)

11.(previously presented) Process as defined in claim 24, wherein the free-cutting area is cut by the free-cutting tool of the free-cutting station such that the edge of the free-cutting area extends transversely to the outer contour lines cut by the tool for cutting outer contour lines.

12.(currently amended) Process as defined in claim 11, wherein ~~in that~~ the free-cutting area is cut by the free-cutting tool of the free-cutting station such that the edge of the free-cutting area extends essentially at right angles to the outer contour lines cut by the tool for cutting outer contour lines.

13.(currently amended) Process as defined in claim 9, wherein the adjacent gasket ~~layers~~ plates are separated completely from one another in the station for cutting outer contour lines designed as a separating station.

14.(original) Process as defined in claim 13, wherein the station for cutting outer contour lines is the last machining station of the follow-on combination tool in the direction of feed.

15.(currently amended) Process as defined in claim 9, wherein the outer contour lines are cut in the station for cutting outer contour lines by means of a cutting edge formed by surfaces of the tool for cutting outer contour ~~liens~~ lines forming with one another an angle of approximately 90°.

16.(currently amended) Process as defined in claim 9, wherein the feed distance is selected to be essentially the same as the extension of the outer contour of a group of finished gasket ~~layers~~ plates and that adjacent gasket ~~layers~~ plates of the group are separated completely from one another in a separating station.

17.(currently amended) Process as defined in claim 16, wherein the group of gasket ~~layers~~ plates comprises at least two gasket ~~layers~~ plates, the facing outer contour lines of said ~~layers~~ plates being cut with the same cutting edge of a tool for cutting outer contour lines.

18.(currently amended) Process as defined in claim 16, wherein the group of gasket ~~layers~~ plates comprises at least two gasket ~~layers~~ plates, the outer contour lines of said ~~layers~~ plates being designed to be essentially point symmetric to one another.

19.(currently amended) Gasket, comprising at least a first metal gasket ~~layer~~ plate and a second metal gasket ~~layer~~ plate disposed one on the other to form a ~~multi-layer~~ multi-plate gasket,

wherein an outer contour of a cut edge of the first metal gasket ~~layer~~ plate comprises a free-cutting line ~~cut~~ and an outer contour line, said free-cutting and outer contour lines together forming a corner, and

wherein a cut edge of said second metal gasket ~~layer~~ plate projects beyond the corner on the first metal gasket ~~layer~~ plate when said first metal gasket ~~layer~~ plate and said second metal gasket ~~layer~~ plate are disposed one on the other in said ~~multi-layer~~ multi-plate gasket.

20. (canceled)

21. (canceled)

22.(currently amended) Gasket, comprising at least a first metal gasket ~~layer~~ plate and a second metal gasket ~~layer~~ plate disposed one on the other to form a ~~multi-layer~~ multi-plate gasket,

wherein an outer contour of a cut edge of the first gasket ~~layer~~ plate comprises a free-cutting line ~~cut by a free-cutting tool~~ and an outer contour line ~~cut by a tool for cutting outer contour lines~~, said free-cutting and outer contour lines together forming a corner, and

wherein a cut edge of said second gasket ~~layer~~ plate comprises a first outer contour line section following a course of the outer contour line of the first gasket ~~layer~~ plate or a course of the free-cutting line of the first gasket ~~layer~~ plate when said first gasket ~~layer~~ plate and said second gasket ~~layer~~ plate are disposed one on the other in said ~~multi-layer~~ multi-plate gasket, and a second outer contour line section smoothly adjoining said first outer contour line section of the second gasket ~~layer~~ plate in the area of the corner of the first gasket ~~layer~~ plate when said first gasket ~~layer~~ plate and said second gasket ~~layer~~ plate are disposed one on the other in said ~~multi-layer~~ multi-plate gasket.

23. (currently amended) Gasket as defined in claim 22, wherein the ~~additional~~ second gasket ~~layer~~ plate is produced by means of a follow-on combination tool, the feed distance with said tool being greater than the extension of the outer contour of the finished gasket ~~layer~~ plate along the direction of feed.

24. (previously presented) Process as defined in claim 9, wherein at least one of the machining stations is designed as a free-cutting station arranged in front of the station for cutting outer contour lines in the direction of feed, at least one free-cutting area being cut out of the starting material in said free-cutting station, the cutting edge of the tool for cutting outer contour lines of the station for cutting outer contour lines dipping into said free-cutting area during the cutting procedure.

25. (currently amended) Process for the production of a ~~multi-layer~~ multi-plate gasket comprising at least a first metal gasket ~~layer~~ plate and a second metal gasket ~~layer~~ plate,

wherein said first gasket ~~layer~~ plate is produced from one respective gasket ~~layer~~ plate section of a starting material comprising several continuous gasket ~~layer~~ plate sections, wherein the gasket ~~layer~~ plate sections are machined during operating cycles in a follow-on combination tool having several machining stations following one another along a direction of feed, wherein at least one of the machining stations is designed as a station for cutting outer contour lines, facing outer contour lines of two adjacent gasket ~~layers~~ plates being cut in said station by means of a tool for cutting outer contour lines, and

wherein the gasket ~~layer~~ plate sections are moved further along the direction of feed by a feed distance by means of a feeding device between two operating cycles,

wherein the outer contour lines of the two adjacent gasket ~~layers~~ plates are cut with the same cutting edge of the tool for cutting outer contour lines and wherein the feed distance is selected to be essentially the same as the extension of the outer contour of a finished gasket ~~layer~~ plate or a group of finished gasket ~~layers~~ plates along the direction of feed,

wherein the outer contour of said first gasket ~~layer~~ plate is provided with a corner,

wherein said second gasket ~~layer~~ plate is produced by means of a follow-on combination tool, the feed distance with said tool being greater than the extension of the outer contour of said second gasket ~~layer~~ plate along the direction of feed,

and wherein said first gasket ~~layer~~ plate and said gasket ~~layer~~ plate are disposed one on the other to form said ~~multi-layer~~ multi-plate gasket such that a first outer contour line section of said second gasket ~~layer~~ plate follows a course of an outer contour line of said first gasket ~~layer~~ plate and a second outer contour line section of said second gasket ~~layer~~ plate smoothly adjoins said first outer contour line section of said second gasket ~~gasket~~ layer in the area of said corner of said first gasket ~~layer~~ plate.